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We get around

More than 75 members of the Patriot Wing, not counting aircrews, are serving at deployed locations in the United States and overseas in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

We are serving in eight foreign countries and the United States. Most of those deployed overseas are medical and security specialists.

Holy Week Religious Service Scheduled

Wednesday, April 16, 2003 -
Chapel Center - Protestant Holy Week Communion Service, 11:30 a.m.

Friday, April 18, 2003 -
Chapel Center - Good Friday of the Lord's Passion Catholic Service - 11:30 a.m. St. Rose De Lima Roman Catholic Church, 600 Grattan St, Aldenville, Stations of the Cross, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Saturday, April 19, 2003 -
Holy Saturday St. Rose De Lima Roman Catholic Church, 600 Grattan St. Aldenville, 8 p.m., Easter Vigil Mass The Chapel Center will be closed.

Easter Sunday, April 20, 2003 -
Pax Terminal - Hangar Three - Protestant Easter Service, 9 a.m.
Chapel Center - Protestant Easter Service, 11 a.m.
St. Rose De Lima Roman Catholic Church, 600 Grattan St., Aldenville, Easter Sunday Mass, 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.
--St. Rose De Lima Church in Aldenville is also offering a weekday Holy Week Mass at 7 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
--The Chapel Center will be open every weekday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. for silent prayer or meditation.
--For those needing directions to St. Rose De Lima Church or for more information, please call MSgt. Robert J. Kazalski at the Chapel Center at Ext. 3031.

First security forces deactivated



SSgt. Chris Dion shows off his deactivation papers and an Iraqi Freedom souvenir as the first security forces member through the demobilization line last Friday. --photo by MSgt. W.C.Pope

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

Days after M-1 tanks rolled into Baghdad, Westover marked a second milestone in the war on terrorism with the first deactivation of security forces.

Last Friday a demobilization line was set up for 25 members of the 439th Security Forces Squadron who were activated in the aftermath of 9/11. About 20 more members are expected to be deactivated in early May.

Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick, 439th AW commander, addressed the security specialists as they started the demobilization process. No one at Westover, he said, paid a bigger mobilization price.

"I can't overestimate the value of having you here almost two years, creating a safe work environment so we could get the

mission done. Be sure when you get home to thank your families and employers," the wing commander said.

The first security specialist through the demobilization line was SSgt. Chris Dion, who had been in uniform since November, 2001. In the uncertain days after 9/11, he was among those who bolstered security at the gate and reinforced the security patrols on the flightline and along the fence perimeter.

Later, he spent six months at MacDill, AFB, Fla., home of Central Command and Special Operations, where his duties included working with the K-9 program. He had his picture taken with General Tommy Franks, commander of Central Command.

Now he's planning to marry the Florida woman he met at MacDill and transfer to

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439th AW MISSION: Actively support national objectives on a global scale with ready, mobility forces

Security... (Continued from page 1)

Homestead AFB, Fla. He leaves the Patriot Wing with good memories.

"One of the reasons I switched from the Army to the Air Force was because I saw the opportunity for activation and a greater role. It's definitely been an interesting year and a half. The deployment to MacDill was a real world situation," he said.

TSgt. Tim Brock was activated just a few weeks after 9/11. He spent the summer of 2002 at Kapaun AS, Germany guarding mobile radar sites supporting Operation Joint Forge Bosnia missions.

He looked forward to returning to his job for the Veterans Administration, Northampton. He knows what a long activation means to those left at home.

"I was proud to serve my country. But, it was difficult not knowing if you were going to be deploying next week, if you were going to war.

"My wife is not from a military background. It was stressful for her not knowing. She kept saying, 'if you've got to go, you've got to go. I support you all the way, but...' It was almost a relief when I went to Germany because at least we knew," he said.

TSgt. Chris Kellam flew Phoenix Raven missions out of a Pakistan Air Force base into Afghanistan from August through December, 2002. He was part of a 13-member 439th SFS squad headed by MSgt. Greg Quill which

flew security missions on C-130s into Bahgram Air Base and the cities of Kandahar, Khost, Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif while they were in on the frontline of the war on terror.

"All the guys who went on the deployment were happy to go to Afghanistan. We felt we did the mission we trained for. There was a sense of fulfillment after 9/11. I think we all wanted to get over there and do our part," Kellam said.

Like others, he agreed that the deployment was toughest on families. He left behind his wife and 10-year-old son. "The first sergeant, MSgt. Dan Major, stayed in contact with our families. That really helped," he said.

SrA. Raymond Harris was working as security forces ART on Sept. 11, 2001. He was sleeping that morning after the midnight shift when his brother called with news that planes had crashed into the World Trade Center. He immediately reported to his squadron.

"A lot of others just came in. There was a sense of pride. They just knew they had to be here when needed, to prove that it's not a one weekend a month job," Harris said.

MSgt. Thomas Gaglione returned to his job as an Essex County Sheriff after serving as NCOIC of Force Protection.

He was among security members who organized a summer picnic for everyone on base and made donations to the Family Support Center. Security specialists were working 12 hour shifts and many were staying on base at night. "The Family Support Center helped a lot of families. When troops were in need, they assisted them," he said.

Gaglione and others said they were leaving with mixed emotions while fellow security specialists are serving here and overseas. "That's the hardest part of being the first group to demobilize," he said.

"The camaraderie of the troops and the morale they displayed are going to be missed because I won't be with them until we join back up on the UTA...the morale stayed strong through everything," Gaglione said, speaking for himself and everyone who wears the blue beret.

Schools salute troops

Public schools in Westover's neighboring city chalked up their support for Operation Iraqi Freedom last week in a letter to President George W. Bush.

"On behalf of the School Committee, administrators and staff of the Chicopee Public Schools I would like to openly offer support for the armed forces fighting in Iraq," wrote superintendent Basan Nembirkow.

He said the schools supports the U.S. military "throughout the world fighting oppression wherever it may occur."

Nembirkow said the schools stood behind Bush as well. "We support you as commander in chief of the Armed Forces in your obligation to secure the rights of the Iraqi people in their pursuit of freedom," he wrote to the president.

"We also support all of our military personnel throughout the world fighting oppression wherever it may occur. We would like to convey our hope that the war in Iraq will end soon and that all military personnel will return home safely," said the school superintendent.

Girl Scouts make donations

The Girl Scouts of the Pioneer Valley would like to donate summer sessions for children who have a parent who is an activated reservist.

The scouts will donate two one-week sessions at day or overnight camp for two girls whose parent is activated and in need of financial assistance. Day camp is offered for 1st through 12th graders, while overnight campers are 2nd through 12th graders. Day camp is offered at Chicopee State Park July 21-25, July 28-Aug. 1, and Aug. 4-8. Overnight camp is available June 28-Aug. 15.

This assistance is being offered to honor Girl Scout Leaders' Day that is being observed on April 22.

Those people interested should contact TSgt. Kim Babin at the family support center at Ext. 3024 or e-mail at kimberly.babin@westover.af.mil.

Pat Stats

Served since Feb. 2, 2003
3,850 passengers - 1,231 aircraft
14,033,188 pounds of cargo
Info from MSgt. Jim Garrity, 42APS

6,594 hot meals served
Box lunches: 4,313
Info from TSgt. David Beauregard, 439SVS

Fuel since Feb. 1
7,191,257 gallons of JP-8
info from Jim Maloney, fuels

PATRIOT
express

Contact us:
DSN:589-2020 - (413) 557-2020
www.afrc.af.mil/439aw
439patriot.editor@westover.af.mil

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Express-ions

